# Guide to the Internship
# for the
# Master of Arts
# Educational Leadership
# (Higher Education Concentration)
(Prepared for mentors and students)

This information serves as a guide for the Internship in Educational Leadership to: (a) practicing administrators or professors who are mentors to the interns, (b) graduate students who are undertaking an Internship experience, and (c) Instructors who are assigned to EDA 6945 and EDA 6946 (Internship I & II in Educational Leadership). It briefly describes and/or defines:

1. the language associated with the Internship in Educational Leadership;
2. the purposes of the Internship in Educational Leadership;
3. the process of mentoring;
4. the prevention and solution of potential mentoring problems;
5. the requirements for reporting and evaluation progress; and
6. the forms and materials associated with the Internship in Educational Leadership

## The Master of Arts (MA) in Educational Leadership

The Master of Arts (MA) in Educational Leadership degree is offered within the College of Education at Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU). Students with this degree typically work in a postsecondary institution, higher education related governing or support organization, P-12 school or district office, and/or educational or training divisions in businesses, philanthropic organizations, healthcare, and/or public service. This program is composed of the program core (9 credits), plus 15 credit hours of concentration courses (higher education and/or P-12), 6 internship credits, and 12 elective credits in the student's area of interest. Regardless of choice of electives, all programs of study and courses must be approved by faculty advisors. The electives may be taken from inside or outside the College of Education, but preference is College of Education graduate courses. In addition, a comprehensive portfolio must be completed addressing the appropriate leadership standards and related descriptors for the program. A total of 36 credit hours are necessary in order to meet degree requirements.

## Internship Experiences for the MA Educational Leadership

All involved with internship experiences (i.e. students, mentors, instructors, and faculty) are expected to act ethically. Internship experiences are bound by FGCU Regulation 4.002 Student Code of Conduct and Student Conduct Review Process. For example, falsifying, misrepresenting, or fraudulently submitting anything that did not actually occur is strictly prohibited and could result in dismissal from the program.

The purpose of the internship is to provide students with work experience in various organizational units to broaden their knowledge base, to apply what they have learned through completion of courses, to provide opportunities to test career options before graduating, to develop and build skills, and to have students engage in experiential learning experiences. It is expected that the internship experiences will better prepare students for the workforce and improve their chances for securing a job and/or promotion upon graduation. The MA in Educational Leadership requires students to engage in two internship experiences through two 3 credit courses (EDA 6945 Internship I and EDA 6946 Internship II).

## Internship Requirements

The Internship in Educational Leadership is problem-based and links research, theory, and practice in studying the range of problems that students will encounter when they become professionals in their field of study and/or advance their professional careers. The Internship in Educational Leadership experience has the following major requirements:

1. Students will be enrolled in EDA 6945 Internship in Educational Leadership I and/or EDA 6946 Internship in Educational Leadership II upon identification of an area to engage in the internship experience, location, identification of a mentor, and approval from program faculty. All internship students will be required to engage in course activities, but the primary focus will be on the internship experience itself.

2. Students are encouraged to consider potential mentors and locations and share them with the Program Leader. The student and Program Leader will work together to identify areas of interest, discuss potential internship opportunities, and to identify potential mentors and locations. A potential mentor may not be a direct supervisor or be in an office where the student currently works. It is incumbent upon the student to contact the Program Leader early in the semester prior to being eligible to be enrolled in the Internship course(s). For example, an anticipated spring enrollment in EDA 6945/6946 Internship I or II course requires students to reach out to the Program Leader early in the preceding fall semester to begin discussing options and planning for following spring semester. The internship, organization and mentor must be in place with approval of the Program Leader prior to the end of the preceding term AND before the beginning of the term in which the student is registered for the internship course. Student are strongly encouraged to plan in advance or risk not being enrolled in the internship course the semester in which they are eligible to enroll.

3. It is the responsibility of the student to identify potential mentor(s) in consultation with the Program Leader in advance. Upon selection of an organization and mentor, the student and the identified mentor will develop an individualized set of activities that will enable the student to gain experiences in areas in which they lack knowledge or experience. Students will utilize the Higher Education Leadership Standards as the basis for establishing their individualized program and apply appropriate standards to their internship experience. Students should examine the current status of their Learning Portfolio to pinpoint areas of deficiency as they work with the program leader and mentors to complete their required Internship experiences. The proposed internship activity must be approved by the program leader, course instructor, and the identified mentor.

4. Each Internship student is to select projects which have been identified as areas of need in the student's background. This requirement is to provide a sustained experience with activities at the student's Internship site and to fill any potential gaps in covering all descriptors under each standard.

5. Each internship experience must be different. Students may not combine internship experiences. Each internship experience must be separate and distinct from one another. In rare instances, an internship experience could potentially be in the same location or area, but only if the experience is distinctly different from the first experience.

6. The number of hours of actual Internship experiences will vary per student, but the minimum number is 150 contact hours for each 3-credit course in which the student is registered, not including course time.

7. In some instances, and dependent upon mentor agreement, the student may begin documenting verifiable internship hours the semester preceding enrollment in the internship course as long as the activity has already been approved by the Program Leader and the mentor verified. For example, if the student is interested in gaining teaching experience at the undergraduate level, it will be necessary for them to begin preparation for teaching under the supervision of their mentor prior to the start of the upcoming semester. Any such instance will require the approval of the Program Leader and selected mentor. Such approval will permit students to begin earning hours toward their internship experience, but may not begin more than 30 days prior to the beginning of the semester in which the student will be enrolled in the internship course.

*Project Requirements.* Project criteria include the following:

- Projects should be goal oriented, of limited duration, and have unique, identifiable, and specific results.
- Projects should have a degree of complexity. Internship students are expected to participate in a variety of activities—such as, hold meetings, prepare memos, interview people, conduct conferences, survey personnel, give presentations, analyze data, assist in report preparation, and/or observe and work with professors in gaining teaching experience.
- Projects should be coordinated with current activities at the internship location. The timing, sequencing, and resources must "mesh" with other activities.
- Projects must have beginning, middle, and ending phases. The Educational Leadership student should be involved in four major functions: project selection, planning, implementation, and evaluation.
- Projects must benefit the organization and be approved by the Program Leader, mentor and Internship course instructor.

## Selecting Mentors

College of Education faculty cooperates and works with students, various postsecondary institutions, and other organizations to identify administrators and/or professors who are willing to serve as mentors. For example, various organizational units at FGCU, Florida Southwestern State College (FSW), and other postsecondary institutions provide opportunities for student internship experiences. Mentors must hold a minimum of a Master's degree from an accredited institution, have a minimum of three years' experience in the area identified, hold positions that are verifiable, and be willing to serve as a student mentor. In some cases, mentors may delegate

mentoring responsibilities to other administrators or professors to enhance the internship experience for the student, but they must agree to oversee this delegation. Mentors are informed about the program, their expected roles and responsibilities, and the benefits of mentoring in meetings with faculty. They file a Mentor Application in Educational Leadership provided by the Program Leader to signify willingness to work with one or more Internship student(s). Approved mentors are expected to serve for a minimum of the semester in which the mentee is engaged in the internship experience. The benefits to mentors include the assistance of the Internship student in carrying out designated responsibilities.

Mentors are responsible for working with the university Program Leader, course instructor, and the Internship student to set up a series of activities that will be mutually beneficial to the student and to the mentor. In other words, the student will engage in shadowing and hands-on activities that will provide the student with valuable educational experiences, while at the same time providing some assistance to the mentor in performing tasks and accomplishing objectives. The mentor also will be responsible for evaluating the Internship student's accomplishments, usually twice during the Internship experience: once in the middle and once at the end of the Internship experience. The number of evaluations in a given semester is at the discretion of the assigned instructor for the course. Mentors will use the Internship in Educational Leadership Student Evaluation Form. Any approved mentor must be committed to serving as such through the semester in which they have agreed to mentor the student intern. In the rare instance that an approved mentor is unable to complete their term, it is the responsibility of the student, mentor, and/or organization to identify an appropriate replacement. Any potential replacement must be approved through the mentor application process and the instructor of the internship course the student is enrolled in.

## **Selecting Internship Students**

Only students who have completed at least 18 hours of course work toward the degree may be enrolled in the Internship course. The selection of organization, mentor, and proposed activities must be approved by the Program Leader at least one month prior to the semester when the Internship is to begin, which provides sufficient time for the program leader, student, mentor, and course instructor to meet, plan, and finalize the internship experience. Contacting and/or meeting with the Program Leader early in the semester prior to enrollment in the Internship course indicates student intent to participate in an Internship experience during the following semester. Internship courses are offered each full semester term (fall, spring, summer). FGCU Accelerate students are required to be enrolled in the full-semester term for their internship courses due to needing a full semester to meet internship requirements. Accommodation will be made for FGCU Accelerate students to join any required in class meetings virtually. .

Criteria have been identified for the selection of Internship students and include:

- Students must have successfully completed at least 18 semester hours of their course work, or will be registered for 18 or more credits during the start of the internship;
- Students must initiate a written request to the program leader to enroll in the Internship in Educational Leadership early in the semester prior to enrollment in the Internship course;

- If working, students need to inform their immediate supervisor that they intend to enroll in the Internship as some students may need to take personal days or make arrangements with their supervisor to participate in the Internship in Educational Leadership activities;
- Students must agree and are expected to meet on campus or virtually (as required) for course instruction during the semesters they are working as Internship students;
- Students must agree to follow the Internship in Educational Leadership guidelines in this handbook.

## **Guidelines and Responsibilities of the Faculty in Educational Leadership**

The Educational Leadership faculty is responsible for supervising and coordinating the Internship program with graduate students. Criteria used for selection of the field-based site include:
- evidence that the site provides for the students model opportunities to experience and/or observe leadership with staff, students, and community members;
- evidence that the site provides opportunities for the students to apply the knowledge they have gained through coursework;
- evidence that the site provides opportunities for student engagement in observing, planning for, or implementing continuous improvement and/or site-based management concepts; and
- evidence that the mentor selected and the site location is appropriate for carrying out the activities the student will engage in.

The Faculty in Educational Leadership is responsible for:
1. assisting in the selection of administrators (or others) who want to serve as mentors for Internship students;
2. selecting students who are eligible to apply for participation in the Internship in Educational Leadership;
3. assuring that the Internship in Educational Leadership guidelines described in this handbook are followed;
4. enrolling students to the appropriate Internship course;
5. evaluating student performance with input from mentors, the course instructor and program leader;
6. communicating with the mentors and Internship students in the field; and
7. approving the mentor-student experience.

As the Program Leader and course instructor work with the mentor(s) and graduate students during the Internship in Educational Leadership experience, several identified tasks are required. These tasks include:
- reviewing each student's progress and Internship experience;
- resolving problems which may arise;
- insuring that the student is receiving performance feedback;
- monitoring student postings on Canvas; and
- meeting with students on campus and/or virtually during the Internship courses.

**Specific Course Requirements for Students:**

- The student is expected to shadow the mentor to become familiar with the daily duties and responsibilities of the educational leader. During this time, students should observe but not assume direct responsibility for these areas.
- It is recommended that the mentors encourage Internship students to assume responsibility for some tasks during the Internship in Educational Leadership experience.
- Students will, in close discussion with their mentor, develop specific and attainable primary goals for their internship experience. These goals will guide the students' experience and work during the course of the internship. These goals should have some level of fluidity due to the need to alter internship goals because of unforeseen changes that may arise during the term. (Primary Learning Goals)
- Students will attend on-campus or virtual meetings as required. Students are expected to pose a problem from their Internship experiences for the seminar participants who will engage in a problem-solving discussion. At the end of the discussion, the student posing the problem will present his/her solution that they have developed based on best practices, theory, and/or literature reviews.
- Each student will participate in scheduled online Discussion Board Forums. As specified by the course instructor, the student will post his/her experiences, and participate in an exchange of ideas among faculty and other students. Student postings must include a discussion of how the student's experiences are related to best practices/theory/research. These online postings and interaction among students substitute for additional on-campus meetings that would occur if the Discussion Board were not available.
- **Internship Journal.** Each student will maintain a journal of activities that includes student reflective thought relative to the experiences which may be the student's online postings, and any artifacts in which the student was involved during the experience. The Internship journal will be submitted to the course instructor via CANVAS by assigned due dates. A separate Log of Internship Activities (2) (listing of dates worked, the hours each day, and what was done each day. The mentor must verify the hours as presented by the student intern (electronic signatures are acceptable). Other required course submissions include evaluations by the mentor, journal entries, discussion board participation, artifacts, and other assignments as prescribed by the course instructor. These items will be completed during the Internship course and submitted in the CANVAS learning management system.
- The grading scheme for internship courses is Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory completion. There are no letter grades for internship coursework.

Learning administrative skills is strengthened when students are exposed to the realities of leadership and managerial work, namely, getting results with and through others. Internship students should assume leadership roles, "shoulder the responsibility," and feel the pressure of the need to act and to live with the consequences of their actions. Internship students must be placed in situations where they are expected to accomplish results through others within a set of time constraints. Another important aspect of the Internship in Educational Leadership is that the student should experience a substantial degree of self-directed learning. Such autonomy helps Internship students to reason through and discover what they need to know in relationship to each problem and their own skills and abilities.

## The Learning Portfolio and Internship Experiences

As a final program assessment in the Educational Leadership program, students will submit a Learning Portfolio through Livetext, Via, or Portfolium and they will present the complete portfolio to a panel of faculty through an interview scheduled with each student the semester in which the student has applied to graduate. Students are strongly encouraged to include internship experiences as part of their Learning Portfolio.

The Learning Portfolio is organized around the Higher Education Leadership Standards and associated descriptors under each standard.

## Summary of Implementation Steps for Mentor/Internship Student Working Relationships

1. The student initiates contact with the Program Leader early in the semester prior to enrolling in an Internship course. The Program Leader works with the student to identify potential mentors and the Internship site(s) for each Internship student. Any internship experience must be in place prior to the end of the semester preceding enrollment in the internship course.
2. The Internship student and mentor(s) discuss proposed activities of mutual benefit.
3. The mentor and Internship student develop details of plans for the Internship projects and identify tasks to be achieved for the completion for the Internship in Educational Leadership (Primary Learning Goals). The Internship student will submit an assignment through the Internship course to the course instructor through CANVAS.
4. The mentor introduces the Internship student to key stakeholders and informs them of the level of authority that the Internship student is being given.
5. The Internship student shadows the mentor to become familiar with the scope of the mentor's responsibilities.
6. The Internship student writes postings to the course Discussion Board to share experiences with other Internship students. Occasionally, students may meet on campus or virtually with other members of the Internship student cohort group to share experiences, progress, and specific cases.
7. The Internship student begins work on specific projects related to their Primary Learning Goals, and begins to assume responsibility for tasks delegated by the mentor.
8. The Internship student and mentor reflect on the day-to-day administrative activities.
9. As the mentor's confidence in the Internship student's abilities and skills increases, greater responsibilities are assumed by the Internship student.
10. The mentor completes Internship Evaluation Reports which are shared with the Internship student, Program Leader, and Internship course instructor.
11. The mentor assures that all Internship requirements are met and review's, approves, and signs the student's submitted time log of activities.
12. The student completes all required Internship coursework and submits as directed by the course instructor during the Internship class.

The Internship in Educational Leadership is completed when the mentor, Internship student, and the Internship course instructor assure that the terms of the Internship requirements have been completed.

**Preventing and Resolving Problems**

This section provides suggestions on ways to avoid problems and suggests solutions to the most common problems that occur during the Internship in Educational Leadership experience.

**Mentors May Be Too Protective and Controlling**

Mentors must realize that future administrators learn from mistakes and that mentoring is a learning experience for Internship students. Students must be allowed to take risks, make mistakes, take responsibility for errors, and learn from their mistakes. Mentors can assist students by giving them responsibilities, allowing them occasionally to be unsuccessful, and providing feedback. When an Internship student receives feedback, it should be analyzed and acted upon.

**Mentors May Take Advantage of Internship Students**

Mentors who frequently need assistance may exploit Internship students and the mentoring process. Sometimes this takes the form of assigning students to meaningless tasks or duties for long periods of time, or allowing students to be "thrown into" a situation. They may not be ready for the experience and may not have some chance of achieving success. Mentors can avoid these mistakes by constantly reviewing the purposes for the Internship in Educational Leadership and checking to see if the assigned activities fulfill the purposes of the Internship in Educational Leadership. Some Internship students have full-time positions on their campuses, and may have previously worked with their Mentor or their office/department. Mentors must create and maintain a clear distinction between projects and duties as part of the internship versus those duties that are part of the Internship student's regular position responsibilities.

**Mentor/Internship Student Personal Relationships**

Frequently the mentor and Internship student become close friends. Working together may lead to the development of a familiar, personal relationship. The problem that sometimes arises is maintaining objectivity in assessing the Administrative Internship student's competencies. The mentor may fail to see the student's "shortcomings." The process of evaluating the Internship in Educational Leadership student's progress should be kept as objective and as free from bias as possible. But, the mentor may want to check his/her perceptions of the Internship student with those of other professionals who have the opportunity to observe or work with the student. Periodic meetings with the university Internship coordinator and or Internship supervisor can assist here.

If the mentor/student relationship results in a personality conflict, the mentor or the student should consult with the course instructor and/or program leader  to resolve the situation. Frequently such conflicts can be traced to the lack of shared understandings and the lack of appropriate time to communicate.

## Effective Administrators May Lack the Time for Mentoring

Sometimes the best administrators have a difficult time performing effectively as mentors. These administrators may be busy with their roles and responsibilities or they may not know how to implement the mentoring process. Mentors can avoid this problem if they carefully review their existing workload. Supervisors expect mentors to discontinue their involvement with the program if they believe they are no longer effective in working with the Internship student. The Internship course instructor or program leader may visit (or communicate with) periodically with the mentor to review the quality of the student/mentor experience.

## Limiting Internship Student's Perspectives

Each mentor has developed one or more styles or strategies for dealing with administrative tasks and leadership responsibilities. The Internship student may come to view the mentor's approaches as the correct and only successful ways to accomplish specific tasks. The mentor continually needs to expose the student to alternative strategies and to other administrators whose styles may be different from the student's own. The emphasis should be on helping the Internship student understand the order and the criteria using different options available for achieving success in different situations.

## Mentor Dependency

Some Internship students find it difficult to assume responsibility for their work. Mentors, in a spirit of assistance, may provide students too much help. Mentors can prevent this from occurring by explaining to the Internship student the importance of making independent and informed decisions. The mentors also can encourage students to take risks with the assurance that the mentor will stand behind the student who occasionally makes mistakes.

## Internship Student Dissatisfaction

Internship students vary in the skills, confidence, and level of experience they bring to the mentoring process. Some students may demand more from the mentoring process. Some students may demand more from the mentor than mentor either wants or is able to give to the student. Mentors can avoid this problem by explaining their expectations for the amount of time, levels of responsibility, and involvement in administrative activities the Internship student can expect. If the student's expectations during this discussion are not met, then another mentor may be found to work with the student or the student's expectations will be adjusted to fit the Internship experience with the assistance of the course instructor and/or program leader.

## Expecting Internship Student Perfection to Match the Mentor as "Hero"

Some mentors, because of their skills, experience, and training are expert or master administrators. They almost always do the "the right thing." Some Internship students view these mentors as outstanding and beyond making mistakes. The students' responses to such imagery may be to devalue themselves and their own performance. Mentors can prevent this to some extent by sharing their own frustrations, failures, and information on their performance. They

also can help the Internship student view the contributions of others as leading to success in the institution or organization.

## Mentor's Low Expectations for Internship Student Performance

Because Internship students are learning, the mentors' standards for their performance may be low. The student may use the excuse of "I am only an Internship student" to allow performance to slip. Mentors should expect Internship students to avoid using their status as an excuse for not attempting to do their best all of the time. The mentor may want to remind the Internship student of the criteria for evaluation should the student lower their own performance expectations. The mentor may wish to copy the evaluation instrument and let the Internship student review it or conduct a self-assessment of progress.

## Speaking for the Mentor

When the mentor and Internship student work closely together, some staff within the organization may conclude that talking with Internship student is like talking to the mentor. The Internship student may be viewed as speaking for the mentor. Others may view the Internship student as a "rubber stamp" or "one of them" and unable to think or act independently of others. Mentors should caution both Internship students and their staff members that the student has a responsibility to perform effectively in specific role areas. The mentor should advise the Internship student to develop a personalized style of leadership and to concentrate on adapting rather than adopting the mentor's particular strategies.

## Cross-Gender Mentoring Relationships

The benefits of men and women working together as professional personnel to gain different leadership perspectives are recognized. Frequently it is necessary, therefore, for cross-gender mentor/student experiences. Sometimes these relationships become suspect to the school and community publics. The mentor and Internship student can prevent this from occurring by: (a) limiting their activities to the standard administrative tasks performed during regular business hours, (b) ensuring that the relationship is strictly professional, and (c) avoiding "situations" which might lead others to conclude that the professional relationship extends to a personal one.


## Forms and Links for Mentors and Students

Mentor Application in Educational Leadership

Log of Internship Activities

Internship in Educational Leadership Student Evaluation Form

Higher Education Leadership Standards